

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing at least one semiconductor device on a substrate having an effective device area surrounded by a peripheral area, said at least one semiconductor device being formed in the effective device area, the peripheral area extending to an outer periphery of the substrate, the method comprising:

forming a dielectric film entirely covering the substrate;

forming a resist pattern on the dielectric film, entirely covering the dielectric film in the effective device area and leaving at least part of the dielectric film exposed in the peripheral area, so that the exposed part of the dielectric film has an inner boundary that conforms with a shape of an outer boundary of the effective device area;

etching the exposed part of the dielectric film;

removing the resist pattern; and

planarizing the dielectric film by chemical-mechanical polishing after the resist pattern has been removed.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein said etching is performed by wet etching.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the resist pattern includes a section that extends a certain distance from the effective device area into the peripheral area to[[,]] entirely covering cover a portion of the dielectric film in the peripheral area ~~out to said certain distance~~, and exposes all parts of the dielectric film in the peripheral area beyond the section of the resist pattern ~~said certain distance from the effective device area~~.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 3, wherein the section of the resist pattern extends from the effective device area substantially five micrometers into the peripheral area.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the resist pattern includes a section that extends ~~a certain distance~~ from the effective device area into the peripheral area to[[,]] entirely cover a portion of the dielectric film in covering the peripheral area ~~out to said certain distance~~, [[and]] the section of the resist pattern is also patterned to partly expose the dielectric film in the peripheral area beyond the section of the resist pattern ~~said certain distance from the effective device area~~.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended): The method of claim 5, wherein the section of the resist pattern extends from the effective device area into and ~~entirely covers~~ the peripheral area for substantially five micrometers.

Claim 7 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectric film covers a wiring layer formed on the substrate.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of claim 7, wherein the dielectric film has an uneven surface topography with a base level disposed in a reference plane in the effective device area, and said etching etches the exposed part of the dielectric film in the peripheral area substantially down to the reference plane.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectric film fills isolation trenches formed in the effective device area of the substrate.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended): The method of claim 9, wherein parts of the substrate exterior to the isolation trenches are covered by a nitride film underlying the dielectric film, and the nitride film functions as an etching stopper ~~[[in]]~~ during said etching.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the resist pattern is formed ~~[[with]]~~ by a single lithography exposure.